DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 317 323 PS 018 727

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TITLE Using Storytime To Motivate Disadvantaged Kindergartners To Read, To Listen, and To Express Themselves Orally.
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 122p.; Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Disadvantaged Youth; *Enrichment Activities; *Home Study; *Kindergarten Children; *Learning Centers (Classroom); *Parent Participation; Primary Education; Reading Programs; Reading Readiness; Screening Tests; *Story Reading; Test Construction

ABSTRACT

A director of elementary education at a Chapter 1 school in a Southern, urban community designed and implemented a practicum study intended to expose disadvantaged kindergartners to stories and books. The primary goal was to stimulate the children's interest in books and desire to read. A second aim was to expand the scope of the practicum to include story activities that could be done at home so that parents could become actively involved in their children's learning. To accomplish these aims, story books were solicited from publishers; a reading center was established; pre- and posttest preschool readiness inventories were administered to participating children; and parents met to share ideas at a mid-practicum meeting. Results were favorable. Analysis of data revealed that storytime sessions, field trips, and times for sharing were positive for children, parents, readers, and staff. Parents indicated that the tips for parents, the sessions for sharing, the books, and the story tapes helped them and their children. All 20 participating children made significant progress. Of the 20 parents, 17 reached the projected goal for active involvement with their children's learning experiences. A total of 57 references are cited. Related materials are appended. (Author/RH)

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Using Storytime to Motivate Disadvantaged Kindergarteners to Read, to Listen, and to Express Themselves Orally

by

G. Jeane Nichols

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NOVA UNIVERSITY

Using Storytime to Motivate Disadvantaged Kindergartners to Read, to Listen, and to Express Themselves Orally

by

G. Jeane Nichols

Cluster 31

PS 018727

A Practicum I Report presented to the
Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova University

1989

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by G. Jeane Nichols under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

April 6, 1990
Date of Final Approval of Report

Muriel L. Lundy
Muriel L. Lundy, Ed.D., Advisor

Acknowledgements

The writer gratefully acknowledges the following people for their contributions to the success of this practicum: Her sister, Jerry L. Nichols Scott, for her positive encouragement when it was needed; Mary Ann Trammel, for her excellent skills in preparing the initial draft of this report; Margie Strange, for her expertise and patience in preparing and presenting this report; Sales representatives of Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich; D.C. Heath; Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston; Houghton Mifflin; Scholastic; and Steck-Vaughn Publishing Companies for their donations of the books used in this practicum; Helen Fitzgerald, for her assistance in the development of the screening device used in the evaluation process; Niccie B. Johnson, principal of the school where this practicum was implemented, for her assistance and support; Sherri Morrison, teacher of the classroom where this practicum came alive, for her time, energy, dedication, and enthusiasm in guiding the children.

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Abstract

Using Storytime to Motivate Disadvantaged Kindergartners to Read, to Listen, and to Express Themselves Orally. Nichols, G. Jeane, 1989: Practicum Report, Nova University Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: Kindergarten/EarlyChildhood/Preschool/ Storytime/Stories/ Storytelling/Read-Aloud/Oral Reading/Oral Expression/ Shared Reading/Big Books/Dramatization/Role Playing/ Children's Literature/Listening Skills/Language Experience/ Disadvantaged/ At-Risk/ Reading Readiness /Parental Involvement/Parent Training.

This practicum was designed to expose disadvantaged kindergartners to stories and books. The primary goal was to stimulate an interest and a desire to read. A second aim was to expand the scope of the practicum to include story activities that could be done at home in order that parents could become actively involved in their children's learning experiences and also motivated to read.

The writer solicited story books from publishing companies; conducted a reading center; administered pre and post pre-school readiness inventories to the children; read stories to the children; solicited other readers to read to the children, supervised and maintained the practicum; conducted a mid-practicum share night for parents; conducted interviews with parents; and developed, monitored, and administered evaluation components.

The results of the practicum were favorable. Analysis of the data revealed that the storytime sessions, the field trips, and the share times were positive experiences for the children, parents, readers, and staff. Parents indicated that the tips for parents, the share sessions, the books, and the story tapes helped them and their children. Of 20 children, 20 made significant progress. Of 20 parents, 17 reached the projected goal for active involvement with their children's learning experiences.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

This practicum was implemented in an urban community with a total population of 218,000 -- 47% black, 52% white, and1% other races. Located along a popular river in the southern part of the United States, the community got its name from a riverboat captain whose trading and Indian interpreter skills brought merchants and settlers to the area. The name given to the local school system is attributed to its first settlers and traders -- the Indians. The Indians gave the rich river land to their interpreter, the Captain. The Captain sold the land to a group of wealthy men. Those men formed a town company which was later incorporated as a city in 1839.

From its bartering beginning, this community has grown into the hub of activities, commerically and socially, for its tri-state area. Its location, desireable climate, navigable river, timber supply, productive soil, and good business management have aided in its growth and stability.

The community now has quality provisions in (a) transportation: rail, major highways, bus carriers, interstate common carriers, and major airlines; (b) communication: United States postal services, United Parcel Services, Federal Express, Bell Telephone, Western Union, Cablevision services, and the three national television networks; (c) medical services: a state medical care and training center, seven major hospitals, and more than three hundred doctors, nurses, and paraprofessionals in general and specialized fields; (d) protection of civil rights, life and property: a trained police force, a large field of legal and judicial professionals, appropriate elected officials, and one of the world's largest military bases; (e) recreation: several lakes for fishing and water sports, parks, playgrounds, athletic fields and stadiums, bicycle and walking trails and musical and theatrical performing arts groups; (f) housing: privately owned residental and government supported housing; (g) religious offerings: 346 Protestant churches, 11 Catholic churches and two Jewish Temples; and (h) education: Head Start Program, licensed day care centers, two private colleges, two branches of state universities and numerous private and public elementary, middle, and high schools. Additionally, a few parents teach their own children in local and state

approved Home Study Programs (Communities Economic Development Foundations, 1988).

The public school system is the largest of the many educational institutions available for children Early Childhood Education (ECE)-grade 12. It is also the largest employer in the city. A 12 member school board is the governing body for the school system with business conducted in opened regular sessions the first and third Wednesdays of each month in the Board Room of the Administrative Center (Central Office).

The Administrative Center is the hub for the educational work force in this community. Housed within its walls are the persons responsible for providing leadership, assistance, and guidance for the 6,000 employees who are directly (and indirectly) responsible for making each day the best possible learning day for the 53,000 children enrolled in the school system's 76 schools.

The staff is as diversified as the three divisions forming its organizational pattern -- Business and Community Affairs, Personnel Administration, and Curriculum and Instruction. There are blacks, whites, certified, classified, middle class, low socioeconomic, young, old, veterans, and novices among the group of approximately 250

staffers. As diversified as this group is, the roles and responsibilities are much the same as you would find in any medium-to-large size school system or corporation.

Its uniqueness lies in the quality, dedication, and determination of its workers. In a system that has been under one consent decree or another since 1973, a city periodically torn by racial conflict, a state strangling from economic woes, and a nation grasping for reform after reform, the school system continues to progress. Some of its recent accomplishments include (a) two nationally acclaimed high schools, (b) two nationally acclaimed middle schools, (c) three nationally recognized teachers-of-the year, (d) one high school representing the state in the national decathlon for the past four years and obtaining national rankings between 5-10 each of those years, and (e) an increase in CAT scores the last five years. In spite of these surrounding woes, staffers find ways to "work it out" and "work together" in positive and productive style.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The practicum was conducted in one of the 51 public elementary schools in the city. The actual setting was a kindergarten classroom

with an enrollment of 20 pupils. The classroom had been classified as Chapter I using the qualifying criteria of family economic status (which also determines free or reduced lunch eligibility) and results from the Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery as mandated by the 1985 State Legislative Act 146 that all kindergarten pupils be screened within thirty days before or after entry. The results from the Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery were used as a diagnostic tool for instructional planning by the classroom teacher.

The classroom is one of the 27 classrooms in a Chapter 1 school with an enrollment of 416. Instruction is provided for pupils from ECE to grade five. The racial ratio for pupils is 56% black and 44% white. The racial composition for faculty is 12 black and 21 white. From ECE (four year olds) to grade three, the average class size is 20 while in grades four and five, the average class size is 24.

Located in a racially mixed, low socio-economic area of the community and bordered by a growing commercial district on its east and south sides, is this rapidly growing neighborhood elementary school. The neighborhood concept prevails with most of the pupils living within one mile or walking distance of the school. Approximately 80 of the pupils ride two buses to school.

The school is one of the oldest facilities in the school system. It is a two-story structure that was built in 1926, however, because of continuous supervision, appropriate maintenance, and excellent custodial care, it is in good condition both inside and out. The well manicured campus with large oak trees, symmetrical in number and gigantic in size, compliment the architecture and make a stately picturesque scene -- a source of community pride.

The old community in which the school is located is changing. Older white families have moved out or are deceased. New and younger families with children are moving in and bringing with them an increase in the school's enrollment. During the 1988-89 school year, the enrollment increased from 385 to 437.

Many of the parents of these pupils are low income workers, with most jobs in the area of domestic labor. Many are single parents with most being mothers, however, some are grandparents. A few of these parents receive assistance through welfare benefits.

The teacher, aide, principal, supervisor, and director make up the professional work force responsible for the academic growth of these pupils. Each of these professionals is involved mainly according to job description:

1. **The teacher** provides developmentally appropriate instruction and guidance for pupils.

2. **The aide** assists the teacher in providing appropriate instruction and guidance for the pupils.

3. **The principal** provides leadership, guidance, and support for staff and pupils. She also promotes and maintains a wholesome and safe learning environment for staff and pupils.

4. **The supervisor** observes, monitors, and assists the staff in developing curriculum and providing wholesome and appropriate teaching - learning situations.

5. **The director** provides overall directions to ensure appropriate curriculum, materials, practices, and techniques for the teaching - learning situation.

As Director of Elementary Education, it is the writer's responsibility to ensure that the delivery of services (listed in the preceding paragraph) is provided and presented (by the school staff [teacher, aide, and principal] and by the supervisory staff) in meaningful and appropriate ways in order to promote the development of the learning potential of all pupils.

The writer serves as one of the system's two directors of

elementary education. This position has the major responsibilities of administering the elementary school program by (a) developing the curricula and programs; (b) supervising principals and instructional supervisors; and (c) providing inservice training for principals, coordinators, teachers, and administrators.

In the area of planning the curriculum and the instruction program, the writer relies on past experiences, background training, expertise of principals and supervisory staff, research, and promising practices. Background training includes study and certification in the areas of elementary education, special education with a specialty in mental retardation, kindergarten education, supervision of student teaching, reading specialist, elementary principalship, supervisor, and superintendent.

Past professional responsibilities and experiences provide the writer with some practical and proven techniques from which to draw. Those experiences include first grade teacher, curriculum coordinator, elementary principal, supervisor of elementary education, and currently, director of elementary education for the past six years.

In addition to positional experiences, the writer has been involved extensively in curriculum planning and development. Some of

those include (a) reading adoptions and management programs, (b) proposal writing, (c) reading prescriptive tests development, (d) handwriting bulletins; (e) language arts management guides, and (f) parental information brochures.

Promoting and maintaining high morale among workers is another important role. Knowing how to work well with people is essential in getting people to work well for you. The writer obtained positive people skills in all of the responsibilities listed earlier. Additionally, working in leadership roles in related organizations contributed much to becoming skilled in working with people. From the many privileged opportunities to serve and lead others, the writer believes the most significant ones were (a) chairperson of the Branch YWCA; (b) second and first Vice-President of the local Girl Scout Council; (c) Area Vice-President and President of the local education association; and (d) Vice-President-elect, Vice President, and President of the State Reading Association.

Chapter II

Study of the Problem

Problem Description

By the time most children reach kindergarten age, they have mastered the oral aspects of language. They are excited and eager to add new adventures to their experiences and know-how. Their self-images are pumped up with the proud and successful feelings of being ready to begin doing things that the "big kids" do in "real school."

Unfortunately, there are some other children whose experiences were just the opposite and their feelings and self-images were different, too. These children were not so elated about leaving home and showed little or no eagerness to begin school. Their enthusiasm for learning new things had been reduced to apprehension and fear.

These children were described by their teachers in a variety of ways, with most of their opinions describing attitudes, behaviors, and self-images that called attention to and expressed concern for the "disadvantaged child." They described a child most likely to be at risk for school failure, peer rejection, and most significantly, a child

whose teacher had to carefully diagnose, prescribe, and implement developmentally appropriate practices and techniques to correct background deficiencies in order to successfully meet his/her needs.

Teachers described these children as shy, quiet, and timid -- children with little or no interest in the conversations and other interactions between pupils and pupils or pupils and teacher. Their attention seemed focused on no particular thing but on everything simultaneously. Distractions came spontaneously. They were easily annoyed, frequently fretful, and continuously bored.

The writer visited eight kindergarten classrooms in Chapter I schools and compiled the following summary of her observations:

1. A large number of children in each classroom seldom handled books in the reading center voluntarily. They had to be directed to do so.

2. When handling books independently, most of the children quickly and very roughly flipped through the pages and in a few minutes put the book down to start doing something else -- something that did not involve books.

3. When participating in small group language related sessions, two or three children pulled or tugged at each other, not participating

in the discussion.

4. While talking with the writer, individual children mostly used body language to answer questions. A typical example follows:

Writer: How do you like it here?

Child: Non-verbal response of moving his head up and down to indicate yes .

Writer: What does (writer moved her head up and down) mean?

Another child: Smiled and asked, You don't know that?

Writer: No, I don't. Do you know what (writer moved her head up and down) mean?

Child: Sholl! That's yes.

5. Some of the children appeared uncomfortable when talking with other pupils, the teacher, aide, and the writer.

The writer met with the principal for assistance in arranging 10 conferences with parents of kindergarten children to find out if they were also affected by the problem. The parents were randomly selected from the kindergarten enrollment and 30 minute conferences were scheduled.

Telephone calls were made to each parent to set up the conferences which were held at the school. Conference times were

cooperatively arranged (by the writer and the parents) at the convenience of the parents. All of the parents accepted and attended their conferences.

Although the conferences were scheduled for 30 minutes, most of them lasted from 40 to 50 minutes with one continuing for 1 hour and 10 minutes. Conference discussions were informal and informative for both parents and the writer. Parents were given the leaflet, "Helping Your Child at Home," a courtesy of the local reading council. The writer obtained some promising commitments for parental involvement and some useful information. Each parent:

1. Showed an interest in their child and his or her well being.
2. Expressed the desire for their child's academic success.
3. Exhibited the desire to help their child with his or her school work.
4. Expressed their feelings of inadequacy in trying to help their child with school work.
5. Expressed the need to be assisted in learning how to help their child.
6. Expressed the need to become actively involved in the growth and development of their child at home and at school.

Kindergarten teachers had continuously worked to bridge the gap between language deficiency and reading (with a love and need for) readiness. They had utilized a variety of periodic language experience techniques, however, this procedure nor these techniques had produced the kind of results or made the meaningful differences the teachers had hoped for.

Teachers had not targeted one of the most successful practices -- storytelling, to use in a concentrated and continuous effort in the classroom while simultaneously extending and reinforcing this practice through the involvement of parents assisting their children at home.

After observing these kindergarteners, visiting with their principals and teachers, talking with their parents, and reviewing their cumulative records, it was evident that these children had entered school with crucial language deficiences. Unfortunately, they were starting off academically disadvantaged.

This practicum focused on these children while addressing the problem: some disadvantaged kindergartners lacked experiences that foster the love of books and the joy of reading. They had little or no motivation to read, to listen, or to express themselves orally.

Problem Documentation

The writer had become aware that some kindergarteners lacked the motivation to want or need to read during routine visitations to schools. In order to focus in on the problem, the writer began a series of inquiries. The Chapter I Department of the school system was the most logical and initial place to start because of the major services it renders to disadvantaged kindergartners.

A Needs Assessment is conducted by Chapter I each year. Two of the areas of need (listed by teachers) for kindergartners in our school system and the years those needs were listed are presented in Table 1.

The 1985 State Legislative Act 146 mandated that all kindergarten pupils be screened within 30 days before or after entry. The Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery was the screening instrument used by the school system. The results from the screening test were used as a diagnostic tool for instructional planning by the classroom teacher. The mean raw scores from the Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery for kindergartners in this school are listed in Table 2, beginning with the 1986-87 school year.

Table 1

Parental Needs Related to Reading

Years	Exposure to Literature	Parental Involvement in Reading Readiness Activities
1985-86	90%	90%
1986-87	93%	90%
1987-88	96%	95%
1988-89	94%	96%

Note. Parents had little exposure to reading.

Table 2

Results of Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery: 1986-1989

School Year	Mean Raw Score
1986-87	62.5
1987-88	60.3
1988-89	62.9

Note. Total possible score was 132. Pupils averaged a mean raw score that placed them at the 50th percentile.

To find out what the opinions of parents were relative to their involvement as individual readers and also as readers for their children, a survey was done by the local reading council in 1987. The results of the survey listed in Table 3 revealed that parental involvement in their children's learning activities was very limited.

Table 3

Survey Results of Parental Involvement In Reading

Was read to as a child	20%
Reading to my child often	10%
Reading should be taught by school	90%
Reading begins at school	95%
Talk leisurely with my child	20%
Buy books for my child	10%

Note. Number surveyed = 100.

The information obtained in conferences that the writer had with parents of kindergarten children was similar to the findings of the Reading Council Survey.

The economic status of the family was the criteria used for classifying children and schools for Chapter I services as well as for

determining free or reduced lunch eligibility.

The 1988-89 Food Service Department records showed that the average income of a family eligible for free lunch was $12, 900.00. The average family size was seven.

Causative Analysis

And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go

-from the nursery rhyme,
"Mary Had a Little Lamb"

As the children listened to their teachers recite this old favorite of a nursery rhyme while watching two of their classmates dramatize the actions, most of them were enjoying the happenings as evident by their smiles, giggles, and occasional chime-ins. Looking closer at the children sitting on a carpet, the writer watched two of the children as they engaged in their own activities of making faces and continuously touching or pushing one another. They were not listening or participating in the storytime. They were not interested.

Another child in another classroom responded to his teacher's simple request to role play the action: "Jack be nimble. Jack be quick.

Jack jump over the candle stick," with "I don't know how. I've never done that before."

The parents of these children had provided little or no intellectual stimulation. During conferences with the writer, most of them expressed a feeling of inadequacy when trying to help their children.

The preceding situations were unfortunate but true examples of children who lacked the experiences and background that were taken for granted as routine in the lives of pre-school children. Recognition that some children were deprived of the opportunities to develop to their fullest extent had challenged teachers and educational researchers to find ways of providing help for them.

Why did some children lack motivation to want or need to read? Why had they not had the necessary background experience? How had they been deprived? The answers to these questions helped to identify some of the many causes for some kindergartner's lack of motivation to read, to listen, and to express themselves orally.

The lack of motivation for some children to want or need to read may have been caused by (a) not being exposed to books and print; (b) not being exposed to conversation; and (c) not having frequent and positive verbal interactions with parents, siblings, and relatives (Roney,

1984).

Unmotivated children had not had the necessary background experience because:

1. Their parents seldom read to them, if at all.

2. Their parents seldom had leisure conversation with them, mostly commands and directions.

3. There were few, if any, books in the home. Their parents saw little or no connection between books and learning to read or to the learning of oral expression.

4. Their vocabularies were small and oftened included a number of unprintable words (Kontos, 1986; Wahl, 1988).

These children had been deprived of the opportunities to develop to their fullest because no one listened to them seriously and no one really straightened out their thinking. Grown-up heard what they said and then either laughed at them or told them to shut-up. No one helped them to understand the real world, leaving them with knowledge that was confused and magical (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkerson, 1984). Most of them lived in overcrowded homes that were barren of any kind of intellectual stimulation. Most of them were exposed to violence, possibly not only through the TV shows they watched, but

also in their daily living (Friedberg, 1989; Mortimer, 1982; Smith, 1989).

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

A review of the literature yielded evidence that positive and meaningful experiences with books and written and oral language played a critical role in the development of literacy skills. The kinds of experiences young children were provided by their care givers greatly influenced the rest of their lives.

G. Haley (cited in Trelease, 1982) expressed her opinion about the problem in her Caldecott Medal acceptance speech in a thorough and precise manner. She stated that "children who were not spoken to by live and responsive adults did not learn to speak properly. Children who were not answered stopped asking questions. They became incurious. And children who were not told stories and who were not read to had few reasons for wanting to learn to read" (p. 12).

Children who had not been exposed to books and conversation often had difficulty learning to read. These children had been deprived of experiences that helped build a context for literacy. They had not had the opportunity to develop a "literacy unit" which included the

hands-on experiences of book handling--front to back, top to bottom, left to right and page turning (Brown, Weinberg, & Cromer, 1986).

Children learned to take meaning and pleasure from books, it did not come naturally. According to Richardson (1988), young children who were not surrounded by books and rich story reading experiences in the home did not learn to take meaning and pleasure from print. These children entered school with a literacy deficit.

It was impossible for pupils to be taught reading and writing without their also developing attitudes toward the processes involved. Young children who lacked prior experience with books and storytelling had not had enough opportunities for literacy development. Roney (1989) pointed out that the lack of experiences with good books left most pupils with untapped expertise of the oral aspect of their native language when they entered school. Most of these children had difficulty in applying meaning to the printed word. They often developed a dislike for reading, writing, and literature.

The motivational quotation "you learn to do by doing" was appropriately applied to the acquistion of language and reading skills. Caregivers who did not provide experience in positive verbal exchange ignored the child's natural opportunity to hear, make sense of, and

practice speech.

In a research review, Kontos (1986) found that before young children became readers, they had to first learn why people read and what people did when they read. This knowledge was called print awareness. Children whose homes were barren of books, never saw their parents or other caregivers read, never had stories read to them by their parents, did not have this knowledge. They had not been exposed to books or print and most likely had difficulty in becoming readers.

Friedberg (1989) pointed out that chidren who entered school from backgrounds void of models for reading were at a greater risk academically than their more experientially prepared peers. Many of these children, like those illiterate or marginally literature adults who have attracted public attention today, were at-risk for growing up to be the next generation of the same.

Illiteracy was costly and tragic, for both the person and the nation. As stated in the slogan of United Negro College Fund, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste," the cost was astronomically non-caring and embarrasingly inhumane.

Jeanne Chall (1984) provided an estimate of the number of

illiterates (including adults who were only functionally literate) as about a third or more of the population -- some tens of millions of people.

Heath (1982) in her study of socialization patterns of three subcultures in an Appalachian community, found that taking meaning and pleasure from books were learned behaviors just as ways of eating, walking, and playing games. Children who were not exposed to books and read-aloud experiences in the home had some difficulty taking meaning from print and to a lesser degree, had difficulty in finding pleasure in books.

In a study done by Radencich (1987) on the frequency of reading and writing role models, she found that young people in this country were not exposed to live reading and writing role models as frequently as might be desired.

Smith (1989) stated that many children did not get the opportunity to be read to at home or in school and they were then expected to learn to read before they got a chance to discover story.

Friedberg (1989) stated that children who had not been surrounded by the world of books and print were at risk academically. Unfortunately they were not exposed to lots of reading, singing, and

talking. These children possibly were the beneficiaries of the following parental causes:

1. Parents may have had no models for reading in their background.
2. Parents may have had only marginal literacy skills so that even reading to a toddler made them uncomfortable.
3. Parents felt that learning to read was the school's job.
4. Home was a crowded place with little privacy.
5. Lighting may have been poor.
6. Stress and anxiety may have run high, as parents struggled with unemployment, under employment, and privations of many varieties.
7. Limited income could buy only necessities.

According to Trelease (1982) in homes where conversations, questions, and reading had not been encouraged, the child entered school markedly short of the basic tools he needed to accomplish his tasks. This child was disadvantaged. He asked fewer questions, used shorter sentences, had a limited vocabulary, and a shorter attention span than his more advantaged peers.

When the role models (caregivers) did not stimulate the child with stories, read aloud for pleasure, listening, and verbal exchange, the child's appreciation and tolerance of listening suffered. His

attention span for this type activity did not develop adequately. Nelson (1989) pointed out that where a child had little or no experience with books it was impossible for him to have a concept of them and the pleasure they afforded. Simply stated, no experience--no concept; no--concept--no interest; no interest--no motivation; and no motivation--little or no learning.

Chapter III

Anticipated Outcomes and Evaluation Instruments

Goals and Expectations

The goals projected for this practicum were (a) to help kindergartners develop a need to listen, to read, and to interact through oral expression; (b) to involve parents as active participants in their children's learning experiences; and (c) to stimulate interest in books and provide pleasure from reading in kindergarten children and their parents.

Behavioral Objectives

At the completion of this practicum (a) seventeen of the twenty children were projected to orally express themselves by voluntarily participating in discussions and activities as verified by the progress chart report and the written observation logs of the clasroom teacher, the aide, the supervisor, and the writer; (b) sixteen of the twenty parents were projected to develop the habit and joy of reading and talking with their children at least three times weekly as documented by the

parents' logs and culminating interviews; and (c) eighteen of the twenty children were projected to show gains in vocabulary as evidenced by 10% increase in scores on the Pre Readiness Inventory (PRI).

Measurement of Objectives

These kindergarten children participated in this language motivation practicum 30 minutes a day for 12 weeks.

Each child's oral participation and involvement in discussion and activities were monitored and recorded daily on the Progress Report Chart by the teacher, aide, supervisor, or writer. A rotating schedule for the observers was utilized. Each observer verified her observations with her signature and date. This instrument was used to document each child's oral expression progress.

A parent orientation session was conducted by the writer at the beginning of the practicum. The principal, teacher, aide, and supervisor also attended the orientation session. The practicum; its importance; parent, teacher, and writer conferences; culminating interviews; and all forms (parent log, parent contract, test permission slip, progress chart and the schedule for monitoring) were presented and discussed. A "Share Time for Parents" was conducted at the mid-point of the

practicum and parent interviews were held at the end. These measures were used to evaluate parental participation.

Each child was administered the PRI at the beginning (pre) and at the end (post) of the practicum. The oral inventory was administered by the writer, the principal, and three supervisors. The time of administration for each inventory was approximately 15 minutes.

The PRI was developed by the Coordinator of Early Childhood Education with assistance by the writer. The pictures were drawn by the writer. The instrument was selected for its ability to screen and inventory preschool readiness skills. During the 25 item oral inventory, each child was screened individually on his or her readiness in the areas of motor, language, concepts, and social-emotional skills (see Appendices A and B).

The results from the pre-inventory screening were used as a diagnostic tool for instructional planning by the classroom teacher and as the entry or pre-level readiness scores for the writer. The results from the post-inventory screening were used as diagnostic and progress measurement tools by the classroom teacher and as the completion or post-level scores for the writer.

The information recorded on the Progress Report Chart and the

information recorded on the Parent Logs were reviewed, compiled, and presented in summary statements. The results of the PRI were analyzed and presented with a percentage comparison using a table.

The writer kept a log to record unexpected events that occurred during the implementation of the practicum.

Chapter IV

Solution Strategy

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

> I suggest that the first priority, taking precedent over all we do, is to concentrate on the attainment by every student of the highest possible level of literacy so that each student will have reached the outer limits of his or her ability to read with comprehension, write and think systemically and logically, and to speak with clarity in a manner that is articulate, precise, and reflective of an intelligent, well educated individual. This priority should be number one. (Bell, cited in Pink & Leibert, 1986, p. 51).

The challenging and perceptive suggestion made by T. H. Bell, former Secretary of Education, addressed one of America's greatest responsibilities--the education of all of it's children. It also identified one of its greatest needs--the development of literate citizens. When parents and educators analyzed the "educational report card," the grades clearly indicated, "desperately in need of improvement".

Pink and Leibert (1986) stated that a large proportion of children in this country have difficulty learning to read. The problem was not limited to minorities and the working-class. Failure also occurred in both rural and more affluent communities. Past remedies seemed to have failed and the proposed remedies appeared similarly to be unappropriate with what was known about child development, classroom teaching, and school improvement.

Among the proposed remedies (or reform, as it was commonly known) were lengthening the school day and year and expanding graduation requirements. Neither of these remedies guaranteed that children who could not read would learn to read. In fact, both of these remedies may have created additional stress and increased the risk of failure for the already frustrated child. Longer time did not necessarily mean longer periods of child involvement in appropriate activities nor did adding courses and carnegie units to graduation requirements. Instead educators and parents should have steered intervention efforts toward developing ways to improve instruction and guidance at both the school and home levels.

According to Smith (1989) children could not be motivated to learn to read simply by being promised that literacy brought the

pleasures of something called stories. Instead children had to be shown that reading provided access to stories, they had to know what stories were. Smith (1985) stated that until children could read stories for themselves, either people had to read stories to and with them. But first, children had to see other people reading stories for their own pleasure.

Studies done by Friend (1982) and Tizard, Mortimore, and Burchell (1981) showed that parental involvement, interest, and supportive attitudes toward the education of their children had a positive effect on pupil attainment. According to Wolfendale (1983) parents had an important role to play in fostering language development and the experiences it provided in their children's learning to read.

Johnston (1989) pointed out that government reports had also cited the connection between parental interest and pupil attainment, advocating closer ties between the home and the school. Also, emphasizing the importance of home-school collaboration, Tizard, Mortimore, and Burchell (1981) stated that a closer partnership between the two partners (home and school) to every child's education was essential for educational advance.

That parents had an important role in helping their children

during the early years develop an interest and readiness for reading by providing language and other experiences that lay the foundation had been well established by both educators and researchers. However, these same educators and researchers were also aware that there were some parents who had not provided these experiences for their children. According to MacCarry (1989) these parents were often from low income homes, where there were few, if any books. They lived in homes where children may have had little opportunity to carry on conversations with adults, or ask questions and search for their answers in books.

How could these parents who seemingly lacked orientation toward reading and books have helped as partners in their child's education? Were they interested in their child's education? What could have been done to motivate them to want to become partners?

According to Johnston (1989) a 1970s survey confirmed most teachers' notions that there was a definite association between social class and reading. Results of the survey showed that the child of an unskilled laborer was more at risk to be a poor reader than the child of a professional. Additional comparisons are discussed in Table 4.

Table 4

Comparison of Social Class and Reading

Factor	Working Class	Professional
Reading Environment	Twice as many never read to by parents	Twice as many more read to by parents
Home Library	Few, if any books	Sizable book collection
Library Members	34% membership	64% membership

Note. The difference was more a matter of economics.

The survey however, found that the percentages were identical (80%) when looking at the factor of parents helping children to read. Both groups of parents viewed themselves as having a role to play in the basic aspect of their children's education.

Other research that indicated that working class parents did not lack interest in their children's education was cited by Mortimore and Blackstone (1982). They suggested that it was more a situation of the parents being inhibited because of insufficient knowledge of the school's curriculum or their lack of self confidence. The common

response that only a few parents in a disadvantaged area participated in any initiative to involve them in their children's education was also disproved by Weinberger, Jackson, and Hannon (1986).

In a review of a study done in the London Borough of Haringey in the 1970s to find out if there was a casual relationship between parental help in children's reading and children's reading performance, Tizard, Schofield, and Hewison (1982) found that the children who (a) took their books home, (b) interacted in reading assignments with their parents, and (c) were monitored by both parent and teacher, made greater gains than either the control or withdrawal groups across all ability levels. These gains were also made by children from homes where parents had very little education, were illiterate, or non-English speaking.

According to Friedberg (1989) most parents, no matter how economically burdened, wanted the best for their children. Summarizing the attitudes and reactions of parents who had been involved in a pilot parent participation project, she stated "that the parents were receptive and appreciative. Their comments on the follow-up questionnaires showed that they valued the gift (four paperback children's books, a tips for success in sharing books pamplet and a flyer describing local

library programs) and the activity it introduced. In addition to the children's enjoyment of the books, an average of at least six other family members enjoyed each packet of books" (p. 16).

The writer in her interviews with 10 parents of the participating children, learned that every one of the parents had the desire and eagerness to be involved in their children's education. They also expressed that their lack of involvement was due to their feelings of inadequacy relative to knowing how to help.

The lack of knowledge as to how to go about it rather than the lack of interest may then have been the cause of the differing results in reading attainment. Another possible solution then, was to help and train parents in ways to help their children.

Meyerhoff and White (1986) pointed out that in order to make significant difference in the academic prospects of young children, you worked through the people who had the greatest influence on their lives during this period -- their parents. One of the three conclusions of their basic research on early development and guidelines for parents was that the practice of offering little or no help or preparation to the child's parents often lead to additional stress, reduced pleasure, and educational losses for everyone involved.

Wahl (1988) stressed that since parents were the child's first teacher, it was most essential for classroom teachers to provide them with practical ideas that could be implemented in the home.

According to Johnston (1989) "to have left unharnessed this largely untapped resource of parents possibly required more justification than the introduction of parental involvement" (p. 357). Supportively, Newson and Newson (1977) wrote: "A revolution in literacy could have been sparked off and fuelled by parents and teachers in determined co-operation" (p. 164).

Teacher attitude was extremely important in helping disadvantaged children and their parents. The teacher needed to realize that the concepts of vocabulary and language developed slowly. She had to be able to accept each child as he was and to respect him as an individual.

The importance of developing a child's background experience prior to and during early reading instruction could not be over emphasized. Roney (1984) stated that teachers had to be certain that the children possessed sufficient background knowledge before they expected to implement exercises that required their students to use non visual information in processing texts. The children involved in

this practicum lacked background experiences, therefore, the teacher had to help these chidren develop the necessary knowledge. Some solutions that may have helped in the development of the deficient background experience were:

1. Reading aloud to children: This helped to awaken the children's sleeping imaginations and improved their language. Trelease (1982) stated that where this was done in school, it improved the atmosphere of the classroom. When it was done at home, it improved the quality of family life. But wherever it was done, the overwhelming result was that it improved children's attitudes toward books and reading.

2. Providing story sessions: These sessions were at the heart of the implementation of this language arts practicum. Readers established strong sessions as a regular feature of the classrom routine. Moss (1984) stated that story sessions scheduled regularly provided opportunities for literary experiences which helped build a context for literacy. The regularity of the sessions helped to emphasize the importance of storytime -- to the listener, to the storyteller, and to the total curriculum.

3. Making books: The construction of story books (big and regular) was a meaningful activity that integrated many oral and written

communication skills. This fun activity also helped to develop fine motor and eye-hand coordination skills. Cassady (1988) pointed out that children learned through active involvement in purposeful and enjoyable literary activities.

4. Making story telling exciting: This was done by using a variety of activities and techniques which included (a) Choral or unison reading. The children loved to chime in for the repeated sentence or phrase. This was especially good for getting the shy child involved; (b) Predicting with pictures that accompanied a story. This practice established good prereading habits and promoted attention to detail and sequence as well as creative thinking skills; (c) Retelling stories by sequencing and retelling with pictures and structurally, by using story frames. Cassady (1988) stated that these story retelling activities reinforced thinking skills as well as oral expression; (d) Telling the story in tellers own words: Nelson (1989) suggested a co-creative process which allowed children to weave their creative thoughts and sentences into the teller's story; and (e) Acting out and role playing with the use of puppets, props, and even costumes by using their imagination, getting them talking, and letting them do their own script. The children loved to pretend (Friedberg,1989).

5. Telling stories: This technique motivated children to read and write themselves. The use of children's speech experiences helped them to develop reading and writing skills (Roney, 1989).

6. Hearing many stories: Children who heard many stories developed a strong motivation for reading. They also learned that reading was enjoyable. Trelease (1982) stated that children learned that reading and writing were real-life experiences when they were exposed to storytelling or were read aloud to.

7. Providing literary sessions for parents: This was done by developing and presenting programs and activities that helped to foster the love of books and reading to families of young children (Friedberg, 1989).

8. Hearing stories: This activity helped children develop language skills. Through stories, they were exposed to the many ways language was put together. Children were introduced to new vocabulary through literature (Trelease, 1982).

Roney (1989) stated that continued exposure to literature through pleasurable storytelling activities helped create literate adults who had the ability and continuous desire to read and write.

The preceding reports found in the literature lent support and

also helped to justify the rationale for this practicum. While storytelling or parent-teacher collaboration were not used in most elementary schools on any regular or continuous basis, the writer believed that there was sufficient historical precedent and applicable theory to recommend that it was time we returned these basics to the classroom.

Description of Solution Selected

The foundation for vital attitudes, habits, and background knowledge did not commence in the pre-school experience of these children. Ideally, the pre-school child learned very early that he could use language (a) to get his needs met; (b) to express his feelings; and (c) to evoke attention, affection, and guidance from those around him--those within his home environment. Unfortunately, for the practicum children, the ideal never became a reality. For these children, vital aspects of growing and learning had to be provided through some other medium. The other medium in this situation was the school.

If these children were to master the basic language skills of listening and speaking, they had to have a wider range of experience --both real and vicarious--than their fortunate counterparts (Roney, 1989).

According to Trelease (1982) such experiences included (a) listening to stories told or read by the teacher; (b) taking field trips to parks, farms, zoos, airports, libraries, fire stations, and other places of interests; (c) using and listening to tape recorders, hearing records; and (d) seeing movies and filmstrips. The main objective in all of these activities was to provide these children with opportunities for language experience. Plenty of time had to be provided for them to react to and talk about the things they had seen and heard.

Using the language experience approach, these children dictated a story for the teacher to write down on the chalkboard and large sheets of tagboard. Illustrations were done by the children. When finished, the sheets were bound to make a big book that was read again and again and again. By dictating stories to their teacher, they also developed concepts about print and enthusiasm for reading.

The preceding solutions (field trips and language experience methods) were just two of the kinds of activities that were used to address the problem of motivating these children to read, to listen, and to orally express themselves.

Additionally, the writer, teachers, or other selected and invited guests read a variety of literature aloud to the children daily.

According to Roney (1984) reading aloud was the only technique with potential for developing all types of background experiences. He further stated that "it was the only way for children with limited ability to develop an understanding of book language and a sense of story, and it was a dramatic way to engender a positive attitude toward literature and reading" (p. 199).

Big books were used frequently so that the children could build on their general knowledge by listening to the reader read stories aloud as they developed concepts about print and saw the page of print that the reader was reading.

Seeing other people reading stories for their own pleasure was one of the first interventions utilized with these "linguistically deprived" children. Some of the other staff members (principal, coordinator, coach, nurse, custodian, and cafeteria manager) were invited and scheduled to read to the class. Reading aloud was done at home and at school. As explained by Anderson, Heibert, Scott, and Wilkerson (1985) in Becoming A Nation of Readers, "the more elements of good parenting, good teaching, and good schooling that children experienced, the greater the likelihood that they would achieve their potential as readers" (p. 117).

Parents were invited and encouraged to be active participants in the practicum. The parents participating in this practicum were provided with a "hands-on" orientation that gave them a thorough overview of what? when? how? and why? The orientation was conducted after school at a time when most parents were off from work and could attend. A demonstration of storytelling and reading-aloud was done. Tips for reading at home were given to each parent as well as parent log forms. An open invitation for parents to read a story to the class was extended. A sight-seeing, book-browsing tour in the classroom was conducted at the end of the orientation.

In informal chats and conferences with parents, the teacher or writer provided the parents with a storytime update, and emphasized the importance of experience rich in books and stories to the child's current and future development. The children made an in-school visit to the school's library and took a field trip to the main branch library in the downtown area. Parents were also invited to accompany their children on this field trip. Parents were encouraged to get library cards, to borrow books on a regular basis, and to visit the classroom to observe their children. At home they made use of the child's natural surrounding--things that were already in and around the home. Parents

were encouraged to do the suggested and other similar activities so often with their chidren that they became routine and habit forming.

Some practical tips were (a) "help children to notice the changes in the seasons: observe trees, bushes, flowers, leaves, clouds, sun and moon; (b) Call attention to trucks, buses, cars, street signs, lamp posts, fire hydrants, manholes, mailboxes, and telephone posts" (Wells, 1986, p. 76).

Parents were encouraged to read stories and nursery rhymes to their children and to play "sound games" such as playing games with words starting with the sound of "m" during mealtime.

In addition, "the parents were encouraged to talk with their children. They were urged to ask their children such questions as What did you play outside? What happened at kindergarten today? Tell me about the children you played with today. Further, parents were encouraged to stimulate self-expression in their children by asking them a series of questions as they looked at pictures in popular magazines together. Parents were also urged to count objects with their children, help them to know and write their names, develop motor control, and teach them to identify colors" (Wells, 1986, p. 76).

The implementation of the preceding solutions helped these

children expand their background knowledge. In similar studies (Roney 1984; Brown, Weinberg, & Cromer, 1986; Wahl, 1988; Friedberg, 1989; Johnston, 1989) the results showed that when children's time was spent in frequent and positive verbal interactions, coupled with quality literary exposure, these children later applied this knowledge in processing all print that they were expected to read. Their initial experience with independent reading was meaningful, enjoyable, and successful.

For many years, educators in the school system in which the writer works, both administrators and teachers, have utilized and advocated literature in the instructional program for young children. They have also encouraged parental involvement in children's learning activities. This same kind of commitment was evident in their search for alternative and preventive programs and techniques for the at-risk child, and for just about as long a period of time. Unfortunately, their choices of solutions had all been separate and apart with emphasis on either literary techniques or parental involvement. Separately, these techniques had not been successful. These two important influences had never been coupled together, or paired for maximum effect.

From the information found in the review of the literature, the

writer believed that by utilizing literature daily with children at school while involving parents in its extension at home, meaningful and benefical results would occur. The writer also believed that exposing these children to developmentally appropriate literature through storytelling activities at school, combined with parental involvement in reading aloud, and increased oral communication with positive interaction at home would help solve the problem. The children would become motivated to read, to listen, and to orally express themselves. Parents would develop the habit of reading and talking with their children and therefore become more involved in their children's education.

The writer shared the belief's and the optimism of Friedberg (1989) who stated:

> If parents were shown that it was possible to make storytime a regular part of the day's activities, that reading aloud was fun, that it defused potentially explosive family situations, that it quieted a cranky child and helped a restless one fall asleep.
>
> if they had access to fine children's books, both to own and to borrow

if they were convinced that this was a way to help their children master academic skills

if it were demonstrated to them that sharing books requires no special knowledge, only love of the child and delight in the activity

if all this took place, we would help parents give their children the gift of a lifetime. We would make today's kindergartners tomorrow's readers (p.16).

Fortunately, all of this did take place. It happened. And because it did, life is much more meaningful, especially for the practicum kids and their parents.

Report of Action Taken

The writer was able to implement the practicum, "Using Storytime to Motivate Disadvantaged Kindergarteners to Listen, to Read, and to Express Themselves Orally" with the actions and activities utilized in the following summary of the practicum implementation.

Preimplementation Action

At the close of the 1988-89 school year, the writer received

approval to do the practicum from her verifer. Permission to work in the selected school and selected classroom was granted by the principal and the classroom teacher. The six elementary supervisors, the selected school based staff, and guest public officials consented to select and read stories to the children according to the writer's schedule. Sales representatives and their companies donated approximately two hundred books to the practicum.

Implementation Action

During the first week, the literary focus was "Reading is fun". A parent orientation was conducted to explain the practicum program. Their roles as readers and conversationists at home were emphasized. Parental commitments to actively participate were solicited and obtained. Storytelling tips and techniques were demonstrated. A storytelling packet was given to each parent.

Pupils were pre-tested with the PRI. Scores were recorded on the comparison chart (see Appendix C). A reading center, "The Reading Haven," was set up in the classroom. The books donated by the publishing companies were processed and placed in the Reading Haven for reading and check-out.

The literacy focus for the second week was "People write books". The children were introduced to the world of story characters and authors using a variety of pictures. Two story characters or authors were presented each day. Impromptu stories were told as the characters were presented. The children gave their opinions of each character and author presented.

For the third week the literary focus was "There are many kinds of books". The class took two in-school trips to the library. On their first trip, they met and talked with the librarian. She presented the program, "The Library: A Home for Books". She showed the children many different kinds of books and stressed that the library had books for everyone.

On their second visit, the librarian read the story, Miss Wishy Washy using a big book. Following the story, the librarian discussed the story with the children. The class dictated an experience story to their teacher who later printed it on a chart. Illustrations for the story were drawn by three of the children. The story was read again and again. It was later hung on their story chart stand.

The librarian took two children to the library where they selected two books to bring back to the class for the teacher to read. One book

was read and discussed the first day and other book was read and discussed the next day.

The literary focus for the fourth week was "Some stories are short, sweet and snappy". The children spent the week listening to nursery rhymes and short poems. Rhymes and poems were discussed and dramatized. Rhymes and poems were illustrated. An experience story, "Rhymes and Poems" was written, illustrated, and read on Friday.

"Children can write books, too", was the literary focus for the fifth week. The class took a field trip via school bus to the main branch library located downtown. The children's librarian guided them on a tour of the library. Following the tour, she explained in detail, the children's floor (second floor). Later, the children visited the "Magic Room" with all of its story-pictured walls and carpeted amphitheater seating. The librarian showed the filmstrip, Curious George Visits the Library. Discussion and interaction followed. Then the librarian told the story, The Little Engine That Could using the flannel board. Discussion and interaction followed.

The children and teacher developed and illustrated an experience story at school the next day. A picture storybook of the library field

trip was written and illustrated by the children and their teacher. The classroom's big story book was read again and again. It was then displayed in the school's main hall for a week and later hung on the story chart stand.

The literary focus for the sixth week was "Some stories are bigger than life". Stories were read this week using big books. Stories read were Rhyme Me a Riddle, Good Night Owl, Bobo's Dream, Sheep in a Jeep, and The Tale of Reddy Robot.

Parents met and shared information about activities and stories that they were doing at home with their children at Share Time for Parents.

The literary focus for the seventh week was "Some stories are old". Animal stories were read or told and dramatized in preparation for State Fair. Stories read or told were: How the Elephant Got Its Trunk, The Three Little Pigs, Henny Penny, The Lion and The Mouse, and The Three Billy Goats.

The literary focus for the eighth week was "Some stories are new". The class took a field trip to the State Fair to visit the Animal Barnyard. They wrote and illustrated an experience story, "A Trip to the Fair". The class read the story again and again and then hung it on

the story chart stand. Two contemporary stories were read and discussed. They were Where Can Racoon Rest? and Little Ducks Learn to Swim.

During the ninth week the literary focus was "Some children write stories for other children". Stories written by children and for children were read that week.

Stories read were Tricking Tracy and Excuses, Excuses. The class wrote their own story, "We Can Write Stories". We can write stories. We tell our teacher what to write. She writes it down. We read it. We draw pictures for our stories. Our stories good. We like them.

"Stories are movers and shakers" (with some help from children and props) was the literary focus for the tenth week. Very short stories and finger plays were told with the children actively involved using puppets or their fingers. Stories and finger plays used were Itsy Bitsy Spider, Ten Little Indians, Five Little Ducks, Jump, Frog, Jump, and All of Me.

Visiting readers read stories to the class each day of the tenth week. Readers were the principal, a gas company administrator, an attendance supervisor, an elementary supervisor, and the assistant to the mayor.

The literary focus "Reading parties are "show-time" was enjoyed by the class during the eleventh week. The children selected their favorite stories and dramatized them. Props and costumes were used according to each performing child's choice. Stories dramatized were The Three Litte Pigs, The Three Bears, The Gingerbread Boy, and Little Red Riding Hood.

Visiting readers read stories to the class each day. Readers were the school board president, Chapter I Coordinator, an elementary supervisor, Supervisor of Libraries, and the Fire Chief.

During the twelfth week the literary focus was "Reading is fun"! Visiting readers read stories to the class each day. Readers included a gas company executive, a District Judge, an ECE Coordinator, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, and the writer. Parent interviews were conducted by the writer after school. Pupils were post-tested with the PRI. Scores were recorded.

Postimplementation Action

One week after the completion of the practicum, all parents returned their Parent Logs and a short written evaluation of the practicum and their involvement. A Reading Party was given for the

children. The story, The Three Bears was read by the writer. Ice cream and frosted bear cookies were served for refreshments. Each child was presented a personalized autographed copy of the book Mother Goose by the writer.

Chapter V

Results, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Results

The goals for this practicum were (a) to help kindergarteners develop a need to listen, to read, and interact through oral expression; (b) to involve parents as active participants in their children's learning experiences; and (c) to stimulate interest in books and provide pleasure from reading in kindergarten children and their parents.

Twenty kindergarten children attending a public school participated in this language motivation practicum 30 minutes a day for 12 weeks.

The first standard of performance was seventeen of the children were projectd to orally express themselves by voluntarily participating in discussions and activities as verified by the Progress Report Chart and the written observation logs of the classroom teacher, the aide, the supervisor, and the writer.

At the completion of this practicum, the combined (teacher, aide, supervisor, and writer) weekly ratings for the 20 children's oral participation in classroom discussions and activities were classified "voluntary". This combined voluntary rating had been perfect since the

sixth week of the practicum. All of the children participated orally and voluntarily without coercion or solicitation. Parents also noticed the increase in the eagerness of their children to initiate conversations. They also reported growth in their children's abilities to express ideas and feelings with them. Now, their teacher has to very carefully monitor and emphasize the adherence to the classroom rules of taking turns, raising hands to be called on, listening to others, and sharing talking time.

The Progress Report Chart (see Appendix D) was used daily to rate each child's oral expression and verbal interaction with his/her peers; teacher, and aide. The observers (teacher, aide, principal, supervisor, and writer) were rotated daily to get a weekly cumulative rating for each child. The children were observed as they participated in the housekeeping and block centers, storytime, outdoor free play, lunch time, and free center choice period. At the end of each week, the ratings (voluntary or solicited) were compiled by the writer in order to obtain the rating for each child. The ratings were discussed with all of the observers and the final group ratings were agreed upon and posted on the chart.

After the children participated in approximately four weeks of

activities that included listening to stories (at home and at school), taking field trips (to libraries, fire station, and the airport), and increased daily conversations with parents and teacher, their ratings began to change from solicited to voluntary. The changes in their oral expression growth pattern are presented in Table 5.

As explained by Trelease (1982), they began to talk about the things that they had seen and heard. They began... "to engender a positive attitude toward literature and reading" (Roney, 1984, p. 199).

Table 5

Oral Expression Growth Pattern

Weeks	Oral Expression Ratings	
	Voluntary	Solicited
1 - 3	6	14
4 - 6	16	4
7 - 9	20	0
9 - 12	20	0

Note. The values listed under the oral expression ratings represent the number of children. Children = 20

All of these children have made progress, however, four of them who were quite withdrawn and shy have made tremendous strides in their eagerness to share their thoughts and especially in their abilities to do "exactly that" -- converse with others voluntarily and appropriately.

The second standard of performance was 16 of the parents were projected to develop the habit and joy of reading and talking with their children at least three times weekly as documented by the Parent's Logs (see Appendix E) and culminating interviews.

A review of the Parent's Logs , the mid-practicum, Share Time for Parents, and the final interviews showed that 10 of the parents read three times a week to their children and conversed frequently with them. The projected goal was exceeded by seven parents with four of them reading daily or seven times a week to their children and three of them reading five times a week. Only three parents did not reach our goal, reading two or less times a week.

Parental growth in the habit of reading to their children and also in reading for pleasure for themselves grew rapidly as indicated in the progress summary presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Parental Reading Involvement Summary

	Average Number Books Read Weekly.	
Week	To Children	For Personal Pleasure
1	2	0
2	2	0
3	2	1
4	3	1
5	3	1
6	3	2
7	3	2
8	4	2
9	4	2
10	4	2
11	5	2
12	5	3

Note. Parents = 20. Children = 20.

The number of books checked out by the children for home reading increased each week. Some parents began to come before or after

school to check out books. At home, parents recorded the date and title of each book that they read to their child on the Parent's Log. These logs were submitted to the writer at the parents' final interviews. Parents enthusiastically talked about the joy and especially the pride that they now felt knowing that they could help their children.

Overall parental progress was good with seventeen of them reading and conversing with their children at least three or more times a week. These parents have developed the literary habit and are now experiencing the joy of reading and talking with their children.

The third and last standard of performance was 18 of the children were projected to show gains in vocabulary as evidenced by 10% increase in scores on the PRI. Administering the measure used to document the results for this standard was the most enjoyable and the most informative data gathering experience of all those utilized in this practicum. The children were alert and eager to participate. They expressed their happiness in conversation with the writer and the three supervisors. To measure the gains made in vocabulary, the 25 item PRI was administered orally and individually to the 20 children at the beginning and at the end of the practicum. The inventory screened each child on his or her readiness in the areas of motor,

language, concepts, and social-emotional skills.

The pre-test scores were recorded to be later compared with the post-test scores. The results of the PRI are presented with a percentage comparison in Table 7. All of the children showed gains in vocabulary as indicated by the increase in scores from September, 1989 to December, 1989. Their scores increased from the 18-23 range in September to the 23-25 range in December, with two children scoring 23; five children scoring 24; and 13 children scoring the maximum score of 25.

The results of the practicum were favorable. Analysis of the data revealed that the storytime sessions, the field trips, and the share times were positive experiences for the children, parents, readers, and staff. Parents indicated that the tips for parents, the share sessions, the books, and the story tapes helped them and their children. Of 20 chidren, 20 made significant progress. Of 20 parents, 17 reached the projected goal for active involvement with their children's learning experiences.

Table 7
Percentage Comparison of Pre and Posttest

Pupils[a]	Mean Score[b]		
	Pretest	Posttest	Gains
10.0	70.0	92.0	26.0
25.0	82.0	96.0	14.0
65.0	90.0	100.0	10.0

Note. [a] = Percentages of pupils. [b] = Mean percentages of correct answers. Children = 20. Maximum score = 25.

Conclusions

The number of high scores on the post-test may be questionable to some, but not the writer. The high scores indicated that young children from a low socioeconomic area and classified as disadvantaged learned when they were provided experiences that were developmentally appropriate and without pressure. According to Trelease (1982) in study after study, the one thing that stood out in the development of readers was children who were read aloud to by their caregivers were more likely to become readers than those who were not. The effects of reading aloud upon language skills had been measured in hundreds of

tests and the results had been significantly positive. This practicum experience could be added to that list of success stories. The use of storytelling motivated disadvantaged kindergarteners to listen, to read, and to express themselves orally.

Recommendations

Anderson et al. (1984) emphasized that the best way to get children to improve and extend their knowledge of letter-sound correspondences is through repeated opportunities to read. It took just a little knowledge for these kindergartners to want to read and begin to read, but that was just the beginning. In light of such progress from a three month praticum, imagine the results of a read-aloud program spread over the year--over several years.

The writer recommends that this practicum experience be revised for an extended period covering grades K-2. In the meanwhile, the teacher of these kindergartners should keep her book open and continue reading to her happy "motivated children".

Dissemination

Requests to replicate this practicum have been made by

principals and coordinators of five elementary schools in the writer's school system. These requests will be granted, where possible.

A summary report will be distributed to the fifty-one elementary school in the school system; the sales representatives of the publishing companies donating the books (see Appendix F) utilized in the practicum; and the city's main branch librarian who served as tour guide and reader for the practicum pupils during their visit to the downtown library.

Copies of the report will also be placed in the school system's professional library and the Staff Development Center.

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APPENDIX A

PRESCHOOL READINESS INVENTORY: A SCREENING DEVICE FOR PRESCHOOL READINESS

A Screening Device For Preschool Readiness
C P Public Schools
Revised 1989

CPSB : Revised 1989
ECIA : Chapter 1

Date of Test _____
month day year

School _____

Test Administrator _____

A SCREENING DEVICE FOR PRESCHOOL READINESS

Student Name _____
last first

Boy
Girl

Date of Birth _____
month day year

Address _____

Attendance Area _____

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Accept _____

Retest _____

Conference _____
Initials Date

Screening for: Vision _____
Hearing _____
Speech _____
Motor _____

AREA SCORES: Number of items correct

Motor _____

Language _____

Concepts _____

Social-emotional _____

Total items correct [ ]

Testing Behavior : Circle the word or phrase in each area that describes the child's behavior during testing.

LANGUAGE	Makes conversation	Speaks reluctantly	Does not speak
WORK HABITS	Completes work	Attempts work	Refuses to do work
ATTENTION SPAN	Attends to verbal tasks	Attends to motor tasks	Is easily distracted
MOVEMENT	Sits quietly	Squirms	Disruptive
ATTITUDE	Friendly Shy	Fearful Stubborn	Aggressive
COMPREHENSION	Understands well	Understands with help	Does not understand

Comments : (Additional information about child) _____

Permission to use this test has been granted by the Chapter I Department of C P School Board and Ms. Helen Fitzgerald, coordinator of Early Childhood Education and author of the screening device.

SCORING KEY: Total points possible 25 Correct ✓ Incorrect x

PART 1 : MOTOR (9 points possible)

1. Builds 3 cube tower. _____
2. Strings 1" beads. _____
3. Copies shapes. _____
4. Cuts paper with scissors. _____
5. Walks up and down stairs. _____
6. Hops 3 times on one foot. _____
7. Reproduces cube block pattern. _____
8. Follows 2 command direction: Pick up the ball; put it in the box. _____
9. Works puzzle. _____

PART 2 : LANGUAGE (7 points possible)

1. Points to 4 body parts. Neck _____ Shoulders _____ Elbow _____Knee _____
2. Names common objects. Spoon _____ Key _____ Button _____ Book _____
3. Discriminates is and is not. Point to the one that: a. **Is** an animal. _____
   b. **Is** not food. _____
   c. **Is** happy. _____
4. Responds to what questions. What do we do with an apple? _____ Why do we have soap? _____
5. Completes phrases. A brother is a boy; a sister is a _____.
   Birds fly; fish _____.
   Fire is hot; ice is _____.
6. Answers questions about the rhyme Humpty Dumpty.
   a. Where was Humpty Dumpty sitting? _____
   b. Who tried to help? _____
   c. What happened to Humpty Dumpty? _____
7. Demonstrates understanding of directional words:
   In _____ Out _____ Up _____ Down _____ On _____ Under _____

PART 3 : CONCEPTS (4 points possible)

1. Counts by rote to 10. _____
2. Counts 10 objects. _____
3. Names missing object._____
4. Names 6 colors. Red _____ Blue _____ Yellow _____ Green _____ Orange _____ Purple _____

PART 4 : SOCIAL - EMOTIONAL (5 points possible)

1. What is your name? _____
2. Are you a boy or a girl? _____
3. How old are you? _____
4. What street do you live on? _____
5. When is your birthday? _____

A SCREENING DEVICE FOR PRESCHOOL READINESS (REVISED 1989)

ACTIVITY	PROCEDURES	ACCEPT
DIRECTIONS: Part 1 (Motor)	Materials Needed: Ball/Box Circle/Cross paper with Crayon Rocking Boat Stringing Beads (4), Shoelace Paper for cutting Safety Scissors Cube Blocks (2 red, 1 yellow) Wooden Puzzle (3 or 4 pieces)	
1. Builds tower.	Say: "Watch me." Demonstrate how to build tower with 3 cubes. Take the tower down Say: "You do it."	Child builds a tower.
2. Strings beads.	Say: "Watch me." Demonstrate stringing of 4 beads. Place the beads and the lace on the table. Say: "You do it."	Child strings all 4 beads.

A SCREENING DEVICE FOR PRESCHOOL READINESS (REVISED 1989)

ACTIVITY	PROCEDURES	ACCEPT
DIRECTIONS: Part 1 (Motor) Continued		
3. Copies Shapes	Give the child a crayon. Place the circle/Cross paper in front of the child. Touch the circle. Say: "Make one just like this." Touch the cross. Say: "Make one just like this."	Child makes the shapes as follows: Circle-any closed line around a space. Cross-horizontal and vertical lines that cross.
4. Cuts paper with scissors.	Demonstrate how to cut a paper into two pieces. Place a pair of scissors and a piece of paper on the table. Say: "Cut the paper from one side to the other."	Child cuts the paper into 2 or more pieces.
5. Walks up and down stairs.	Place rocking boat on the floor, stair side up. Say: "Watch me." Demonstrate how to walk up and down the steps. Say: "You do it."	Child walks up and down the steps as directed.

A SCREENING DEVICE FOR PRESCHOOL READINESS (REVISED 1989)

ACTIVITY	PROCEDURES	ACCEPT
DIRECTIONS: Part 1 (Motor) Continued		
6. Hopes on one foot.	Demonstrate how to hop three times. Say: "Hop on one foot as many times as you can."	Child walks up and down the steps as directed.
7. Reproduces pattern.	Place three cube blocks on the table. Make the pattern: Red-Yellow-Red. Mix the cubes. Say: "Make the blocks look just like I did."	Child reproduces the pattern: Red - Yellow - Red.
8. Follows a two-part direction.	Put the ball on the floor. Put the box on the table. Say: "Pick up the ball: put it in the box."	Child repeats both actions.
9. Works puzzle.	Place a complete 3 or 4 piece puzzle in front of the child. Take the pieces out, and place them on the table. Say: "Put the pieces in the puzzle."	Child completes puzzle.

A SCREENING DEVICE FOR PRESCHOOL READINESS (REVISED 1989)

ACTIVITY	PROCEDURES	ACCEPT
DIRECTIONS: Part 2 (Language)	Materials Needed: Enlarged Picture Cards - cat, ice cream, coat, stove, girl, boy. Humpty Dumpty pictures, Ball (or bean bag) Box, Spoon, Key, Button, Book	
1. Points to body parts. **DO NOT DEMONSTRATE.	Give the following directions one at at time. Say: "Point to your neck." "Point to your shoulders." "Point to your elbow." "Point to your knee."	Child points to all 4 body parts correctly.
2. Names common objects.	Place the spoon, key, button, and book on the table. Touch each one in turn. Ask: "What is this?"	Child identifies each object.
3. Discriminates is and is not.	Group the cards in pairs. Cat - Stove Ice Cream - Coat Girl - Boy Place the cat/Stove pictures on the table. Say: "Point to the one that IS an animal." Remove the pictures.	

A SCREENING DEVICE FOR PRESCHOOL READINESS (REVISED 1989)

ACTIVITY	PROCEDURES	ACCEPT
DIRECTIONS: Part 2 (Language) Continued		
3. Continued	Place the ice cream/coat cards on the table. Say: "Point to the one that IS NOT food." Remove the pictures. Place the girl/boy cards on the table. Say: "Point to the one that IS happy. Remove the pictures.	Child points to each picture correctly.
4. Answer what questions.	Ask: "What do we do with an apple?" Ask: "Why do we have soap?"	Eat it, cook with it, make pie (etc.) Clean, wash, take a bath, clean clothes, or clean dishes.
5. Completes phrases.	Say: "brother is a boy; sister is a ____." Say: "birds fly; fish _____." Say: "fire is hot; ice is _____."	
6. Answers questions about nursery rhyme.	Place pictures out on the table in correct order. *(Pictures should go from child's left, to his right in correct sequence.)	

A SCREENING DEVICE FOR PRESCHOOL READINESS (REVISED 1989)

ACTIVITY	PROCEDURES	ACCEPT
DIRECTIONS: Part 2 (Language) Continued		
6. Continued	Say rhyme touching appropriate picture as you say each phrase. Ask: "Where was Humpty Dumpty sitting?" Ask: "Who tried to help?" Ask: "What happended to Humpty Dumpty?"	Child answers-on the wall. Child answers-horses and men. Child answers-he fell off the wall , he broke.
7. Demonstrates understanding of positional words.	Place a box and a ball (or bean bag) in front of the child. Say: "Put the ball in the box." "Take the ball out of the box." "Put the ball up in the air." "Put the ball down on the floor." "Put the ball on the table." "Put the ball under the chair."	Child follows all directions.
DIRECTIONS: Part 3 (Concepts)	Materials Needed: Spoon, Key, Button, Book, 10 Pennies, Crayons, or inch cubes in the 6 basic colors - red, blue, green, yellow, orange, purple.	

A SCREENING DEVICE FOR PRESCHOOL READINESS (REVISED 1989)

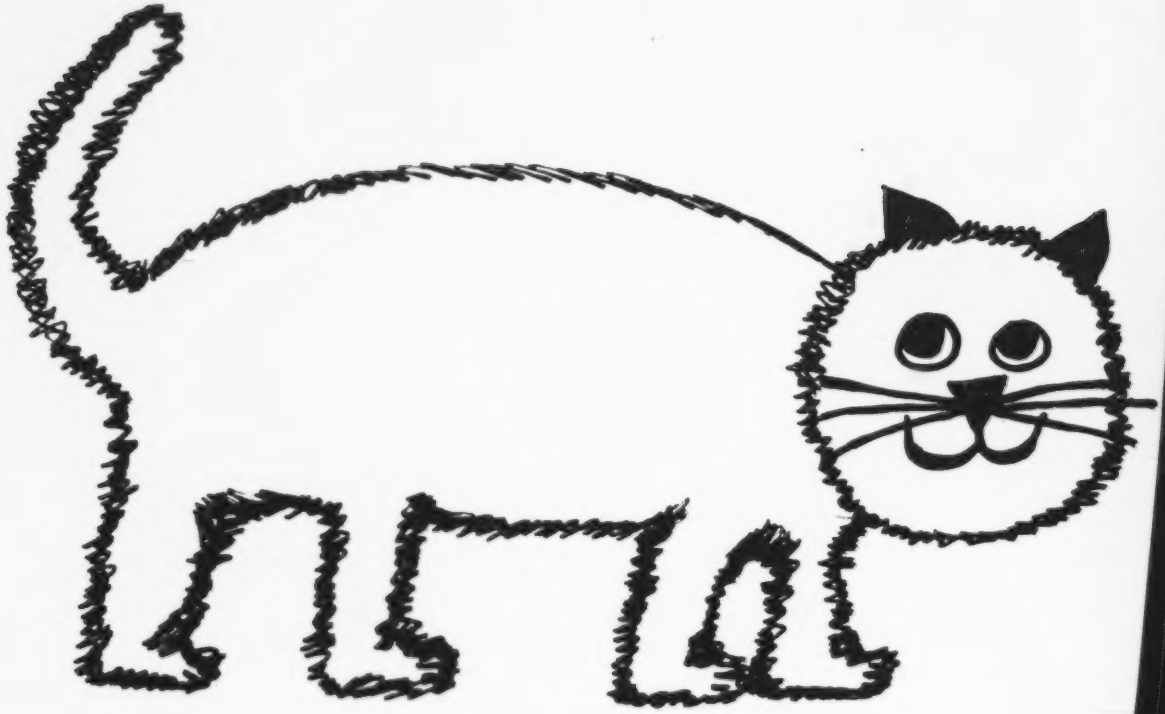
ACTIVITY	PROCEDURES	ACCEPT
DIRECTIONS: Part 3 (Concepts) Continued		
1. Counts to 10.	Say: "Count for me as far as you can go."	Child will count in order from one to at least ten.
2. Counts 10 objects.	Scatter a set of pennies on the top of the table. Say: "Count these pennies for me."	Child counts from one to ten in correct sequence.
3. Identifies missing object.	Place the spoon, key, button, and book on the table. Identify each object. Say: "Look at the things on the table." Say: "I will take one away." Have child turn away, or hide his eyes. Remove one object. Say: "Look. Tell me what is gone."	"Child names missing object.
4. Names colors.	Place crayons or inch cubes in the 6 basic colors on the table - one color at a time. Touch each one and say: "What color is this?"	Child identifies all 6 colors.

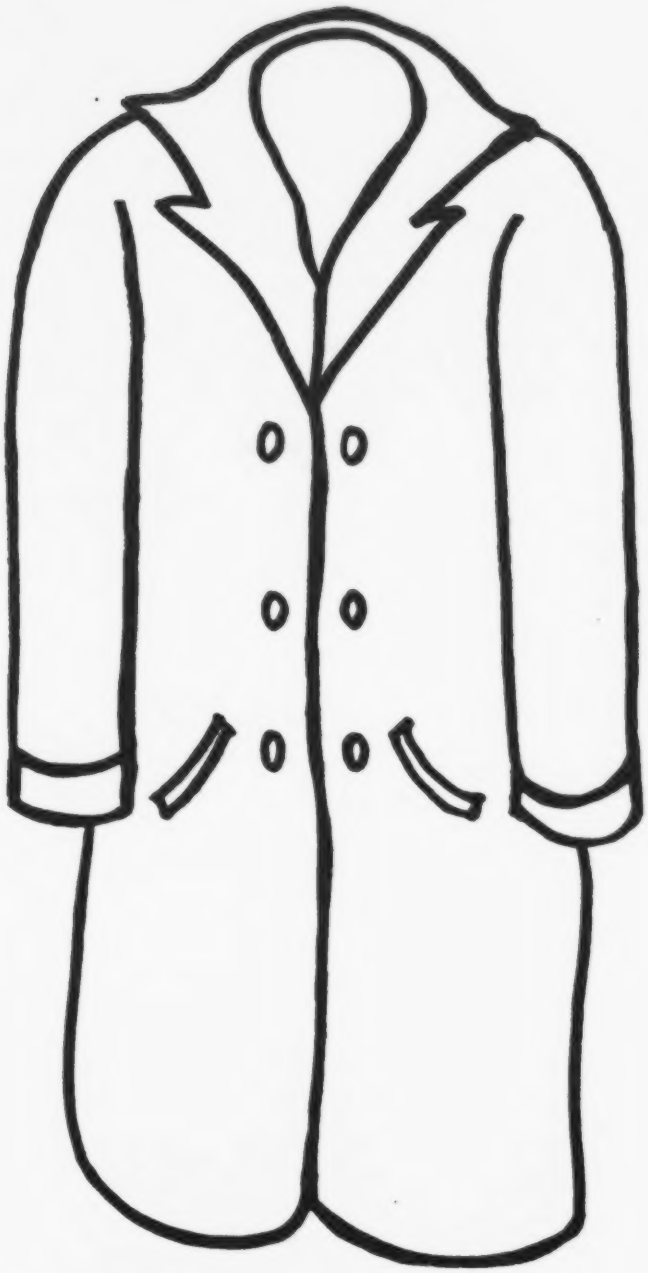
A SCREENING DEVICE FOR PRESCHOOL READINESS (REVISED 1989)

ACTIVITY	PROCEDURES	ACCEPT
DIRECTIONS: Part 4 (Social-Emotional)	Materials Needed: None	
1. Says name.	Ask: "What is your name?"	Child gives first name.
2. Tells if boy or girl.	Ask boys: "Are you a boy or a girl?" Ask girls: "Are you a girl or a boy?"	Child responds correctly-boy or girl.
3. Tells age.	Ask: "How old are you?"	Correct age in whole years.
4. Tells street.	Ask: "What street do you live on?"	Correct street name.
5. Tells birthday.	Ask: "When is your birthday?"	Child states correct month and day.
WHEN THE TEST HAS BEEN COMPLETED	1. Thank the child for working with you.	
*Test Review Should Include: 1. Total scores possible-child's score. 2. Brief summary of child's strengths-child's weaknesses. 3. Answer any questions parent may have related to child's work. 4. Emphasize attendance at Parent orientation meeting.	2. Give a Happy Face sticker. 3. Review test results with parents.* 4. Give the parent a participation notice Thank the parent for coming. 5. Complete all required information on the front of the test-before you take the next child.	

APPENDIX B

PICTURES INCLUDED AS ASSESSMENT MATERIALS



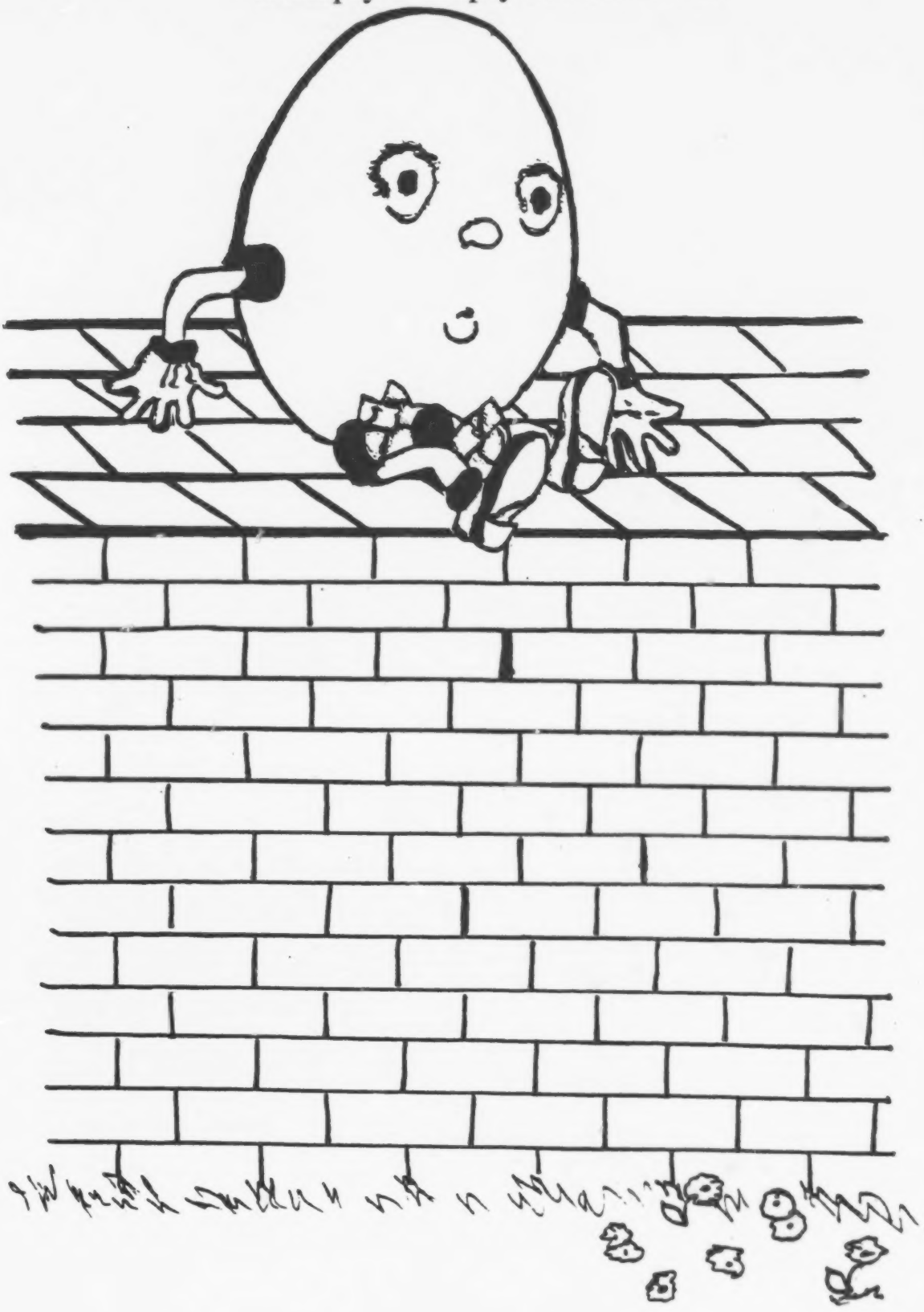


104

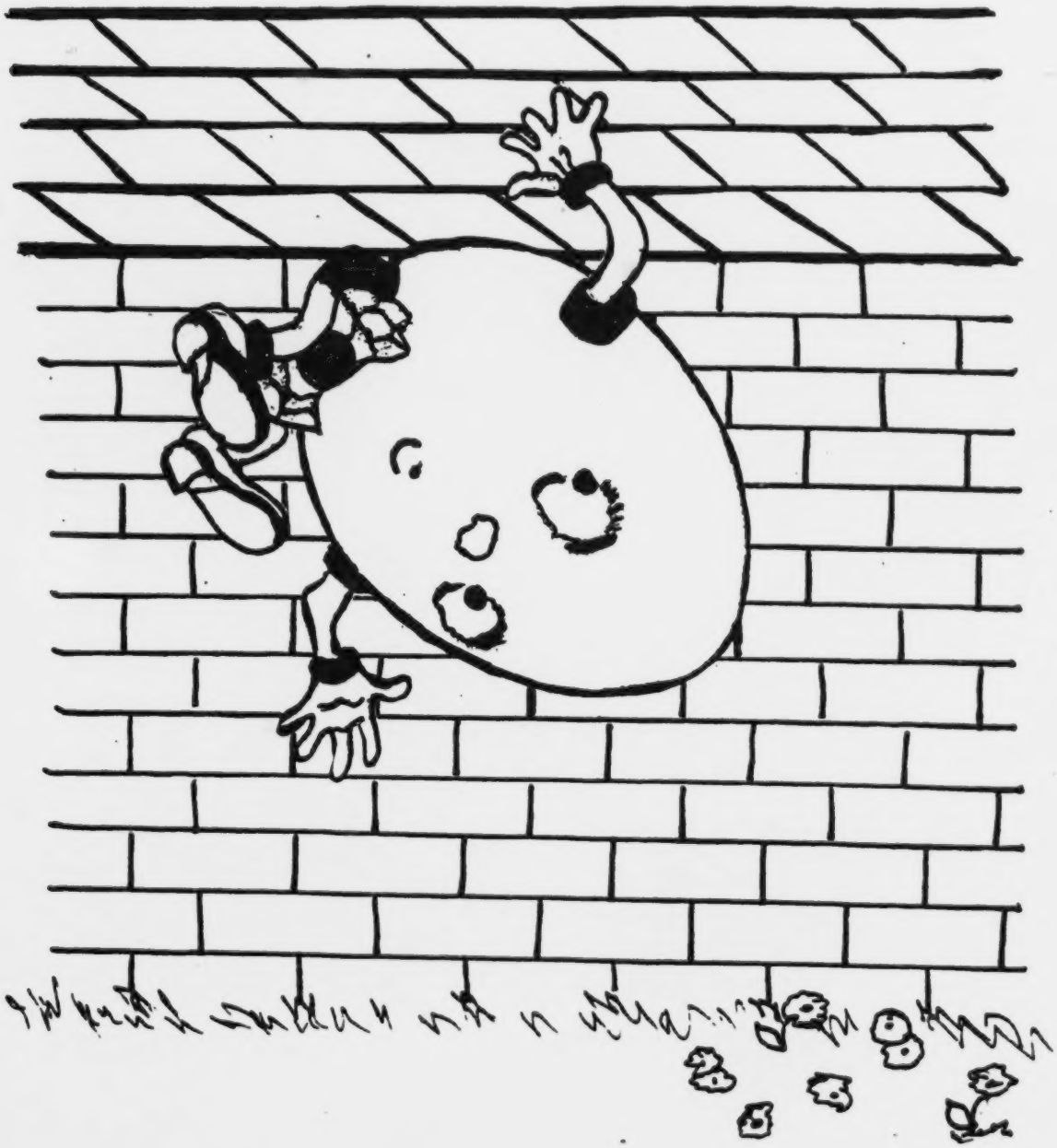
12
3
6

32

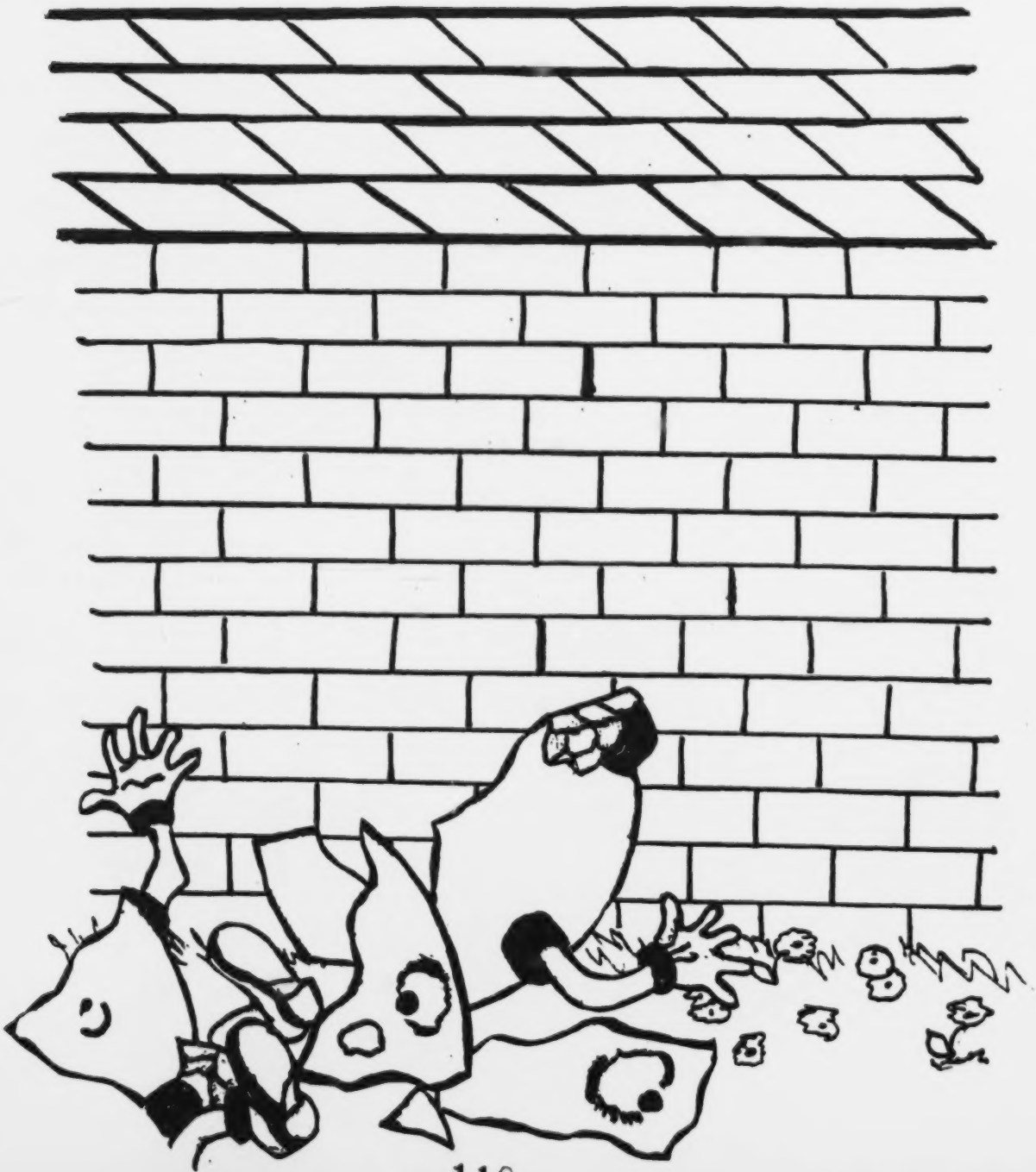
Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.



Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.



All of the King's horses, 93
All of the King's men;
Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty
Together Again.



APPENDIX C

COMPARISON CHART

C. P. School Board

G. Jeane Nichols
Director of Elementary Education

Dear Parents,

The chart below compares your child's Preschool Readiness Inventory scores from September, 1989 and December, 1989.

SKILL AREA	PERFORMANCE RATING	SKILL AREA	PERFORMANCE RATING
Motor _____	_____	Motor _____	_____
Language _____	_____	Language _____	_____
Concepts _____	_____	Concepts _____	_____
Social-Emotional _____	_____	Social-Emotional _____	_____
TOTAL _____	_____	TOTAL _____	_____

APPENDIX D

PROGRESS REPORT CHART

PROGRESS REPORT CHART

Area: _____ Date: _____

Week: _____ Observer(s): _____

_____

_____

_____

PUPIL	DEVELOPMENTAL FOCUS: _____		
	Voluntary	Solicited	Comments
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			

KEY: + Above observer's expectation
√ Meets observer's expectation
- Below observer's expectation

NOTE: Pupils will be observed daily. His/her progress will be discussed by the observer's at the end of each week and a combined rating given. Weekly rating will be posted on the Progress Report Chart.

APPENDIX E

PARENT'S LOG

PARENT'S LOG
READING AT HOME (RAH-RAH)
SEPTEMBER 5 - DECEMBER 1, 1989

CHILD_____ PARENT_____

Title of Book	Date

APPENDIX F

LIST OF BOOKS DONATED BY PUBLISHING COMPANIES

List of Books and Kits
Donated by Publishing Companies

Publishing Company: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

Butterflies -- A Reading Readiness Activity Kit
Contents:
Big Book Story Books

1. How the Elephant Got It's Trunk
2. Jack and the Beanstalk
3. Little Ducks Learn to Swim
4. Little Red Riding Hood
5. The Lion and the Mouse
6. The Tale of Reddy Robot
7. The Three Little Pigs
8. Where Can Raccoon Rest?

There are eight (8) Picture Booklets (one copy each to accompany the big story books.

Also included:

Four (4) story tapes
Teacher's Edition
Teacher's Resource Package
Instructional Big Book
Alphabet cards
Magnetic letters
Two (2) puppets
One (1) attribute set
Two (2) game boards
Game spinner
Picture cards

Kites Level K/R
Contents:
Teacher's Edition
Teacher's Resource Bank
One (1) Student Book
Unit and End of Book Tests
Reinforcement Activities:
workbook version and
teacher's edition

A collection of small books (two copies each)

<u>Set 1</u>

1. Over in the Meadow
2. Mary Wore her Red Dress
3. Good Times with Rhymes
4. One Little Elephant Balancing
5. Jump, Frog, Jump!

Set 2

1. Jesse Bear, What will you wear?
2. More Good Times with Rhymes
3. Five Little Ducks
4. Bear Hunt
5. Ten, Nine, Eight

Publishing Company: D. C. Heath and Company

Little Story Book Kit
Contents:

1. The Three Billy Goats
2. Goldilocks and the Three Bears
3. Who Took the Farmer's Hat
4. Oh, A Hunting We Will Go
5. The Little Red Hen
6. Hey, Diddle, Daddle
7. Nobody Listens to Andrew
8. Can You?
9. ABC Rhymes
10. The Picnic

Also included:
Listening tapes
Story boards
Character cards
Activity Pieces

Publishing Company: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston

Rainbows
Contents
Shared Reading Books
Activity Big Book
Forty-eight (48) Picture Booklets (8 stories--6 copies each)
Stories on Tape
Two (2) puppets

Teacher's Manual
Teacher's Idea Book
Teacher's Idea Book
Picture and Letter Cards
Blackline Practice Masters
Blackline Reteach Masters

Publishing Company: Houghton Mifflin

Kit: A Collection of Big Books and Regular Size Books
Contents:

Big Books

1. Rhyme Me A Riddle, Sing Me A Song
2. Good Night Owl
3. bobo's dream
4. The Three Bears
5. Sheep in a Jeep

Each of the Big Books has a regular size companion book.

Also included are the following regular size books:

1. Katy and the Big Snow
2. Curious George Rides a Bike
3. Alexander and the Wind Up Mouse
4. Sylvester and the Magic Pebble
5. Dogger

All books except bobo's dream, and Doggers have accompanying tapes. In addition there is a Teacher's Manual and a set of Blackline Masters to go along with the stories.

Publishing Company: Rigby

Four (4) Big Books with companion small books four (4) of each copy
Contents:

1. The Cat and the King
2. Just Me
3. Off to Work
4. What Can You See?

Literary 2000
Contents:

Collection One

Set A

1. A Zoo
2. A Toy Box
3. Who's Coming For A Ride
4. What A You?
5. Who Likes Ice Cream?
6. The Farm
7. The Circus
8. Getting Ready For The Ball

Set B

1. The Ball Game
2. Tommy's Tummy Ache
3. Teeny Tiny Teena
4. Monster Meals
5. Fruit Salad
6. All of Me
7. Watch Out!
8. I Spy

Set C

1. When I Play
2. Buffy
3. Ouch!
4. Jack-in-the-box
5. What Goes in the Bathtub?
6. A Scrumptious Sundae
7. Don't Wake the Baby
8. When I Was sick

Set D

1. Our Baby
2. The Birthday Cake
3. I Like
4. Sunrise
5. Happy Birthday
6. Kittens
7. All Join In
8. The Pet Parade

Set E

1. Mud Pie
2. The Scarecrow
3. On the Farm
4. In My Room
5. Dressing Up
6. Out Dog Sam
7. Sharing
8. In My Bed

Collection Two

1. What Would I Do?
2. The Fight on the Hill
3. The Shoe Grabber
4. Invisible
5. The Horrible Thing With Hairy Feet
6. The Gumby Shop
7. Grandma's Bicycle
8. Do-whacky-do
9. What Are You Going to Buy
10. Cow Up a Tree
11. The Amazing Popple Seed
12. Jessie's Flower

These books also have accompanying tapes.

Publishing Company: Shortland Publishing Company
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4. The Gingerbread Boy
5. The Lion and the Mouse
6. The Cat's Surprise